

Iowa's 'Great Places' 108-172 Webster County competing for

state funding

BY KELLI BLOOMQUIST
Messenger staff writer

Being named one of Iowa's "Great Places" means millions of dollars in funding as well as key technical and financial networking that could prove key in a community's

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cultural longevity.

Webster County, as well as the city of Fort Dodge, are now among 145 communities vying for the prestigious designation following a late Friday morning presentation to members of the Iowa Great Places Citizen Advisory Board.

As part of an initiative through the Iowa Department

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of Cultural Affairs, the advisory board is making stops in each of the 145 communities to learn of the history and offerings in each area.

With invitations being sent to the state committee from both the Fort Dodge Young Professionals board and the Webster County Conservation board, the two agencies combined to present "Frontier of the Future" highlighting the many recreational and cultural opportunities available throughout Fort Dodge and the Webster County area.

"Fort Dodge has a population of over 29,000 people and offers many diverse sporting, arts and cultural activities," noted the Fort Dodge Young Professionals. "Currently, Oak Hill is a designated historical area of town, the Self-Supported Municipal Improvement District is responsible for the beautification of downtown and in progress is an Arts and En-

tertainment district. We are also the home to the Harlan Rogers Ball Diamond Complex, Fort Dodge ATV Park, Brushy Creek Recreational Area and have begun some extensive Riverfront improvements along the Des Moines River, all of which provide some unique sporting and recreational opportunities. Our vision for Fort Dodge is to become a valued destination and activity center for all Iowans and visitors to our state. Our goal is to make Fort Dodge one of Iowa's Great Places to not only visit, but also to call home, by creating new jobs and new recreational hot spots, while taking advantage of the natural beauty of our community."

"We feel that with your partnership we can complement the outdoor amenities that the Greater Fort Dodge Area and Webster County have to offer,"

added Webster County Conservation Director Matt Cosgrove. "Webster County is a "Great Place" because of the outdoor recreational opportunities that exist in the Des Moines River Valley. These recreational opportunities offer an authentic, primitive outdoors experience that may provide a potential tourism alternative to developed, commercialized recreation."

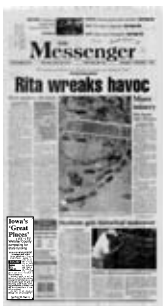
Following the city and county's presentation, the three members of the citizen advisory board were treated to a trolley ride throughout the Fort Dodge area as well as a visit to the Smeltzer mansion.

The official designation of three of Iowa's Great Places will take place on Oct. 11 at a state conference in Iowa City.

Other area communities issuing invitations were Emmetsburg, Fort Dodge, Hamilton County, Humboldt County, Lake City, Pomeroy, Twin Lakes and Webster City.

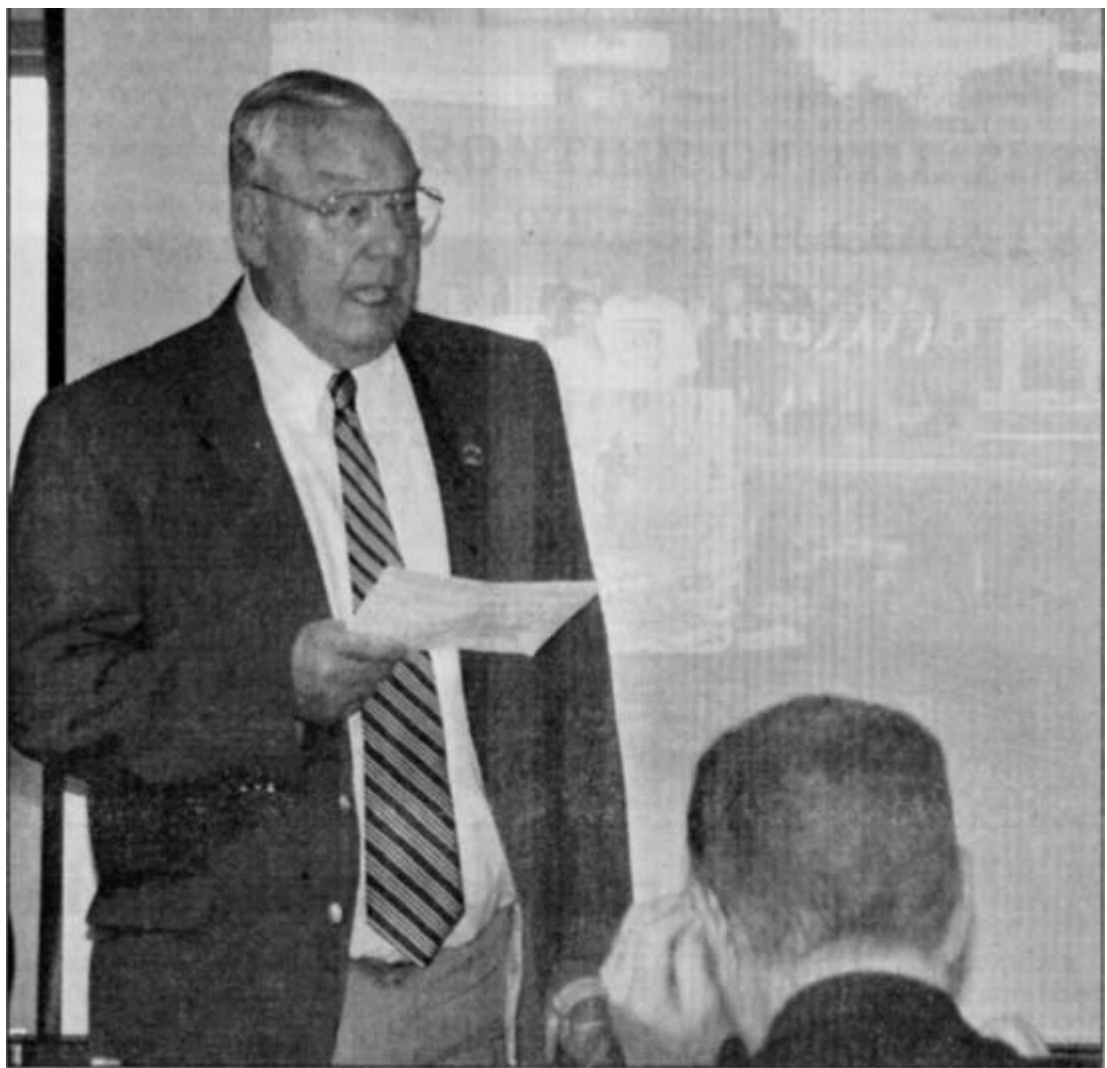
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—Matt Cosgrove
Webster County Conservation director





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-Messenger photo by Kelli Bloomquist

WITH MEMBERS of the Great Places Citizen Advisory Board looking on, Fort Dodge Mayor Will Patterson introduces the county's Iowa Great Places presentation "Frontier of the Future."

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Area communities vie to be 'Iowa's Great Place'

By KELLI BLOOMQUIST
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More than 145 Iowa communities are currently vying for the opportunity to be named one of "Iowa's Great Places."

As part of an initiative through the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, three communities will be chosen in October to be a part of the pilot Great Places program which will allow the community access to additional technical and financial assistance.

"The number and the quality of the invitations we received show the tremendous enthusiasm for Great Places," Department of Cultural Affairs Director Anita Walker said. "Iowans clearly accepted the challenge to think about what was genuine and authentic about their places and dream about what it would take to make them great places."

Coaches with the Iowa Great Places initiative will be dispatched to each of the

Area communities and counties issuing invitations to the Department of Cultural Affairs to be named one of Iowa's Great Places are: Emmetsburg, Fort Dodge, Hamilton County, Humboldt County, Lake City, Pomeroy, Twin Lakes, Webster City and Webster County.

cities to help officials identify their needs and readiness to present offers to the Great Places Citizen Advisory Board. The board will select three communities in October to be a part of the state's pilot program.

Among the 145 invitations submitted to the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs were the communities of Emmetsburg, Fort Dodge, Hamilton County, Humboldt County, Lake City, Pomeroy, Twin Lakes, Webster City and Webster County.

"Each and every one of the 145 places that extended invitations will benefit from the Great Places initiative through the coaching process and new training opportunities," said Walker. "The three pilot

Great Places will be part of our learning laboratory in this first year of Great Places, during which the state will explore coordinated, focused ways to deliver technical and financial assistance to deliver powerful results."

The Iowa Great Places initiative was introduced by Gov. Tom Vilsack in his 2005 Condition of the State address, challenging state agencies and Iowans to be bold and creative in developing new partnerships for turning neighborhoods and communities into great places to live.

The first communities to be named one of "Iowa's Great Places" will take place at a conference in Iowa City on Oct. 11.

